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AUTHOR Smrekar, Claire
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ABSTRACT

This study uses Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital to understand varying levels of parent participation in schooling. Bourdieu argues that schools draw unevenly on the social and cultural resources of members of the society by invoking particular linguistic styles, authority patterns, and types of curricula. The cultural properties acquired from home differentially affect students' adjustment to school, transforming cultural resources into what Bourdieu calls cultural capital. This study extends the organizational focus of community, school choice, and teacher practices and attitudes by refracting these images through the lenses of family background, defined as cultural capital. Case studies of a Catholic elementary school, a magnet elementary school, and a public neighborhood elementary school reflect the intersection of school organization and family capital and the character and content of family-school interactions. Appendix A discusses research methods for the studies, and Appendixes B through G present details about specific aspects of study methodology. (Contains 3 tables and 135 references.) (SLD)

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